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Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 20 December 2013

[*on the report of the Second Committee (A/68/440/Add.2)*]

68/221. International Year of Light and Light-based Technologies, 2015

The General Assembly,

Reaffirming its resolutions 53/199 of 15 December 1998 and 61/185 of 20 December 2006, on the proclamation of international years, and Economic and Social Council resolution 1980/67 of 25 July 1980 on international years and anniversaries, particularly paragraphs 1 to 10 of the annex thereto, on the agreed criteria for the proclamation of international years, as well as paragraphs 13 and 14, which state that an international year should not be proclaimed before the basic arrangements for its organization and financing have been made,

Recognizing the importance of light and light-based technologies in the lives of the citizens of the world and for the future development of global society on many levels,

Stressing that enhanced global awareness of and increased education in the science and technologies of light are vital for addressing challenges such as sustainable development, energy and community health, as well as for improving the quality of life in both developed and developing countries,

Considering that the applications of light science and technology are vital for existing and future advances in, inter alia, medicine, energy, information and communications, fibre optics, agriculture, mining, astronomy, architecture, archaeology, entertainment, art and culture, as well as many other industries and services, and that light-based technologies contribute to the fulfilment of internationally agreed development goals, including by providing access to information and increasing societal health and well-being,

Considering also that technology and design can play an important role in the achievement of greater energy efficiency, in particular by limiting energy waste, and in the reduction of light pollution, which is key to the preservation of dark skies,

Noting that 2015 coincides with the anniversaries of a series of important milestones in the history of the science of light, including the works on optics by Ibn Al-Haytham in 1015, the notion of light as a wave proposed by Fresnel in 1815, the electromagnetic theory of light propagation proposed by Maxwell in 1865,

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Einstein's theory of the photoelectric effect in 1905 and of the embedding of light in cosmology through general relativity in 1915, the discovery of the cosmic microwave background by Penzias and Wilson and Kao's achievements concerning the transmission of light in fibres for optical communication, both in 1965,

Considering that the celebration of the anniversaries of these discoveries in 2015 would provide an important opportunity to highlight the continuous nature of scientific discovery in different contexts, with particular emphasis on women's empowerment in the science sector and on promoting science education among young people, especially in developing countries,

Noting that at its 2013 substantive session, the Economic and Social Council organized its work for the annual ministerial review under the theme "Science, technology and innovation, and the potential of culture, for promoting sustainable development and achieving the Millennium Development Goals",

Reaffirming the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from 20 to 22 June 2012, entitled "The future we want",[1]

Noting the endorsement by the Executive Board of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization at its 190th session of the initiative to proclaim 2015 the International Year of Light[2] and the adoption of that initiative by the General Conference at its thirty-seventh session, on 19 November 2013,[3]

1. *Decides* to proclaim 2015 the International Year of Light and Light-based Technologies;

2. *Invites* the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, mindful of the provisions of the annex to Economic and Social Council resolution 1980/67, to facilitate the organization and implementation of the International Year, in collaboration with Governments, relevant organizations of the United Nations system, the International Council for Science and other relevant academic and non-governmental organizations;

3. *Stresses* that the costs of all activities that may arise from the implementation of the present resolution above and beyond activities currently within the mandate of the lead agency should be met from voluntary contributions, including from the private sector;

4. *Encourages* all States, the United Nations system and all other actors to take advantage of the International Year to promote actions at all levels, including through international cooperation, and to increase awareness among the public of the importance of light science, optics and light-based technologies and of promoting widespread access to new knowledge and related activities;

5. *Requests* the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, mindful of the provisions of paragraphs 23 to 27 of the annex to Economic and Social Council resolution 1980/67, to inform the General Assembly

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[1] Resolution 66/288, annex.

[2] United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, document 190 EX/Decisions, decision 47.

[3] Ibid., *Records of the General Conference, Thirty-seventh Session, Paris, 5 – 20 November 2013*, vol. 1, *Resolutions*, sect. V, resolution 25.

at its seventy-first session on the implementation of the present resolution, elaborating, inter alia, on the evaluation of the International Year.

71st plenary meeting
20 December 2013